A STUDY OF RURAL MARKETING IN HIMACHAL PRADESH WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO FMCG MARKETED BY MULTINATIONAL COMPANIES

SYNOPSIS OF THESIS

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DECLARATION

I hereby that the dissertation synopsis entitled **"A STUDY OF RURAL MARKETING IN HIMACHAL PRADESH WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO FMCG MARKETED BY MULTINATIONAL COMPANIES"** to be submitted for the partial fulfillment of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy is my original work and the dissertation has not formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, associate ship or fellowship of similar other titles, It has not been submitted to any other University or Institution for the award of any degree or diploma.

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1. INTRODUCTION

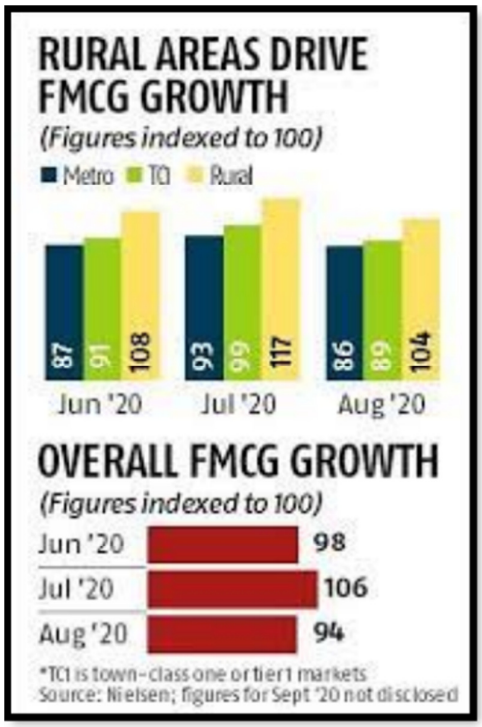
Indian rural market

Rural marketing has evolved into a dual activity, this can be said in the sense that a great deal of products are moving to rural market from big retailers and on the other hand the rural market itself is pushing a great deal of products and raw material tourban areas and the said companies. As per the report presented by **Accenture (2019)**, "Masters of Rural Markets: From Touch points to Trust points - Winning Over India's Aspiring Rural Consumers." As a result, companies are enthusiastic about the rural market in a great sense, which are predicted to develop at a quicker rate than urban consumer markets. Also the reach of media telecommunications services has increased in the rural areas and as a result rural customers are more aware about products and this information is impacting their purchasing decisions. Rural customers are growing towards a larger idea of value supplied in the form of branded products as compared to merely cheap pricing, in accordance with the overall trend. The research emphasises rural consumers' improved networking skills and their proclivity to seek information from a variety of sources in order to be more informed when making purchasing decisions. As a matter of fact rural market of the country has opened gates for all the big and popular brands as the nature of demand is diverse. Rural marketing refers to the process of creating, advertising, and distributing rural-specific products and services in order to meet consumer demand while simultaneously achieving organizational objectives.

Source: IBEF Report, 2019

Figure 1: Growth of Rural FMCG Market

In India, there are around 650,000 villages in the hinterlands. About 850 million people live in these villages, accounting for roughly 70% of the country's population and their GDP contribution is almost similar to that of urban areas. In the present times the rural areas are almost similar to urban areas in consuming goods and services. Rural India accounts for one-third of the customers of some of India's major consumer enterprises, and presents enormous investment opportunity for the products of different brands and even private labels; this can be said in the sense that the market size and consumption pattern are shifting in a positive direction. As per the reports from **E&Y (2020)** from the year 2000, per capita GDP of the country has increased by 6.2% in terms of CAGR and this rate is liable to increase in near future, also business of FMCG companies is liable to grow in multi folds by 2025 i.e.from USD 20 billion (2018) to USD 100 billion (2025).



Source: IBEF Report, First Quarter, 2021

Figure 2: Present of Rural FMCG Market

The rural market has been rapidly expanding in recent years, and it is currently largerthan the urban market. Villages are home to over 70% of India's population. India's villages are home to around 800 million people. The marketer's new motto is "GoRural." In the present times the rural market is the preference of all the Indian and foreign brands of FMCG products i.e. companies like Colgate-Palmolive, Godrej, and Unilever are competing for their piece of the pie. It can be stated that if the above said companies move with a positive approach and collaborative benefits then the rural market is capable of catering all sorts of products and services. Village marketplaces, also known as village haats, have existed in Indian communities since ancient times. The haats are essentially a meeting place for local buyers and vendors. The barter system was widely used, and the same is in practise in presenttimes as well.

FMCG Market

By 2020, India's FMCG market is predicted to increase at a rate of 27.9% CAGR (Compounded Annual Growth Rate), reaching US$103.7 billion. Furthermore, the rural FMCG market is expected to develop at a CAGR of 14.6 percent between 2020 and 2025, reaching US$100 billion and US$220 billion. The FMCG sector in India has grown at a pace of 21.4 percent per year over the previous ten years. From 2011 to 2017-2018, revenues in the FMCG industry increased dramatically, rising from US$ 31.6 billion to US$ 52.8 billion. Furthermore, the rural FMCG market is expected to develop at a CAGR of 14.6 percent between 2020 and 2025, reaching US$100billion and US$220 billion. The rural setting contributes for 45 percent of overall revenue in the FMCG business, while the urban environment leads with 55 percent of total revenue. In India, more than 65 percent of the population lives in rural areas, and these individuals spend over half of their entire income on FMCG items. By 2025, India's population of consumers buying consumer items online is expected to reach 850 million.

1.1. Factors Contributing to the change in the Rural Market

Green revolution

Agriculture has benefited from the significant attention given to it in the respective economic plans (Five year) and this was having a positive effect on the productivity of agriculture as a whole. More refined agricultural processes, latest mechanics, multiple cropping, more refined cash crops and the development of prominent allied. Agriculture has benefited from the significant attention given to it in the respective economic plans (Five year) and this was having a positive effect on the productivity of agriculture as a whole. More refined agricultural processes, latest mechanics, multiple cropping, more refined cash crops and the development of prominent allied sector i.e. dairy, fishery, etc. has provided the rural people with more and more disposable income to spend on latest FMCG products. In India, about 75% of villagesare having the facility of regular water and electricity and the state is providing with

all the facilities to take active part in the economic development of the area. For most of the crops, farmers are earning a great return. Throughout the process, the reliance on seasonality has decreased, resulting in increased discretionary income. As a result of this circumstance, India's largest conglomerate, Hindustan Unilever Ltd., has expanded its rural market in the name of 'Bharat' business. Company had reached to around 35,000 villages including 22 million families and the respective value of investment was around INR 200 million since December 1999.

Biotechnology's Emerging Role in Indian Agriculture

The reports from government and private agencies state that agriculture activities in India are lagging on the fronts of total and collective yields as compare to other developed economies of the world. Agriculture yields in nations like the United States, Canada, Israel, and Germany are high, whereas agriculture yields in countries like India, Brazil, and Nigeria are substantially lower than the international average. The employment of biotechnology applications has generated a significant difference in this regard. When it comes to increasing agricultural yields, biotechnology plays a critical role. For example, the output of wheat in the United States is three times of India, while the yield of sugar cane is 2.5 times higher. Theseadvanced countries have made substantial use of biotechnology, but the notion has yet to catch on in underdeveloped countries. Because everything is becominginternationally competitive in the age of globalisation, we can no longer exist in isolation in terms of agricultural productivity. We must employ biotechnology applications in the country i.e. in terms of high yielding seeds and cultivation methods and that too with a blend of biotechnology. General farmers of the countryare not well aware of the system and they must be informed about the same and it isthe obligation of researchers, scientists, administrators, and policymakers in the country to do so. It will increase the amount of discretionary money available to ruralpeople.

Rural communication

About 50% of the rural areas are well-connected with all-weather roads, making them accessible all year. However, there are certain states that are virtually entirely connected with metal roadways.

This connectivity has increased the exposure of rural people to the range of advanced products and services, and enhanced their mobility. Korean consumer durables corporations have begun to look beyond their noses after witnessing sucha scenario in these regions. They are now betting on the rural markets. LG and Samsung, two industry behemoths, have already devised plans for expanding intorural India. As per the reports of **IMRB (2018)** more that 70% of the villages are having the facility of D2H or private television network. Villages are already opting for dish antennas, and they have previously been exposed to a variety of items via ads. In the near future, all of the villages will be connected to telephone services, and several communities have already done so. Apart from that, the internet is a near- term reality. The ministry of communication, GOI is positive enough to provide the telephone connection to 100% rural areas. Tata cellular has previously reached rural India by making its initial foray in southern region of the country, recognising thesesorts of potential and interests among rural people.

Development Programmes

Planning commission of the country is making huge investments to develop the rural parts of the country by providing them with all the facilities comparable to urban areas. These programmes have provided rural residents with cash and assisted them in changing their lifestyles. The programs are more related to agriculture and allied activities but the main focus was on development in the areas like health, education, rural hygiene, etc. Following the start of economic reforms in 1991, the government has paid special attention to rural India, implementing several development projects in these regions. In the Union Budget of 2000, the finance minister made various announcements aimed at enhancing current programmes and launching new ones for rural regions,

such as financial inclusion, Kisan Credit Cards, cooperative financing and even PMGDY (Pardhan Mantri Gramodyog Yojna).

Challenges faced by Rural Marketing

Despite fast progress in the rural sector, there are still issues that need to be addressed in rural marketing. The following are some of the most typical issues:

Transportation

Transportation is a crucial part of the process of transporting goods from metropolitan manufacturing areas to outlying communities. In rural India, the transportation infrastructure is abysmal. As a result, the majority of communities are inaccessible to the marketer. There are six lakh villages in our nation. 50% of the areas are not properly connected with main road. In many rural areas of India, only kachcha roads exist. Even these routes become impassable during the monsoons. Although India boasts the world's second biggest railway system and some of therural areas are not directly connected with train rail network.

Communication

There are number of barriers in the success of promotions made in rural areas. Consumers in remote areas have a very low literacy rate. As a result, print media has a limited application in rural areas. Aside from poor literacy, the rural people's tradition-bound character, cultural obstacles, major issues is the backwardness in terms of economic progress. In our country's rural areas, these amenities are woefully inadequate. In comparison to metropolitan regions, rural communities still have a low literacy rate. There are 18 recognised languages in India. In rural regions, all of these languages, as well as several dialects, are spoken. Many folks do not understand English or Hindi. Such issues are very important for connective rural people with the main stream development programs of the country.

Proper Media Attention

The overall reach of organised media can only reach 30% of India's rural population. Only 18% of the rural population is covered by print media. In principle, the radio network reaches 90% of the population.

However, the number of people who actually listen is far lower. Television is widelyused and is an excellent means of interacting with the rural population. However, it is not available in the country's interior. Television is predicted to reach 20% of the ruralpopulation. However, the real audience is little. The movie, on the other hand, is an excellent medium for rural communication. However, in rural regions, these possibilities are few.

Warehousing

Because production and consumption cycles rarely coincide, a storage function is required. Many agricultural goods are seasonal in production, but demand is constant. The storing function compensates for differences in quantity and time. Rural areas have unique challenges in storage as well. The highest tier of public storage in our nation, the central warehousing company and state warehousing are still far fledged dream of rural people in the country. In the lack of suitable storage facilities, successful distribution in interior outlets is nearly impossible. Stocks areonly kept in urban warehouses as a result cost of raw material is increasing and reverse pricing system is having a number of drawbacks.

India's village structure

In India, the village structure produces a slew of issues. The majority of the communities is tiny and spread out. It is estimated that 60% of the settlements have a population of less than 1,000 people. The communities' dispersed location raises distribution costs, and their modest size has an impact on the economic sustainability of building distribution hubs.

Rural Markets and Sales Management

When compared to urban marketing, rural marketing requires more personal selling effort. People engaged in rural sales may assist the consumers in selecting viable products and services. It has been noticed that salespeople in rural areas do not appropriately inspire their customers.

Inadequate banking and credit facilities

Lack of appropriate credit facilities and bank facilities creates issues also create a number of issues in equal distribution of income in the rural areas. In the lack of suitable financing facilities, retailers are unable to carry optimal stock levels. They are unable to provide credit to customers as a result of this issue.

Improper STP (Segmentation, Targeting and Positioning) activities

It is the practice of splitting a complete market into several sub-markets. The heterogeneous market is divided into a number of units that are reasonably homogenous. In rural marketing, market segmentation is just as crucial as it is in urban marketing. The majority of businesses believe that rural marketplaces are uniform.

Branding

The most reliable way of expressing quality to rural customers is through the use of a brand. Local brands are becoming increasingly important in rural regions, even as national ones gain popularity. This might be attributed to rural consumers' illiteracy, ignorance, and limited purchasing power.

Packaging

In terms of packaging, smaller products are more preferred in rural regions than larger packages. All critical supplies are now unavailable in smaller packages in communities. Consumers with lesser incomes are unable to acquire large and medium-sized packaged items.

1.2 Background of Rural Marketing

Rural marketing has grown as a vibrant and attractive field. India's economy is mostly centred on agriculture, with around 7,00,000 communities involved in agricultural operations directly or indirectly. Rural India is the base of economic development of the country, contributing considerably in the economic developmentof the economy in terms of food grains, vegetables, and fruits, all of which are necessary for human survival. Above 60% of India's population lives in rural areas and is dependent on agriculture and related activities such as dairy, poultry, and pisciculture, either directly or indirectly. Due to shifting consumer tastes, rural items andproduce are in high demand in cities and metropolitan regions, as well as internationally. Foreign visitors are particularly fond of rural items such as handlooms and handicrafts. The Indian economy is affected significantly by changing demand for rural products. In developing nations like India, rural marketing is gaining popularity. Self-help groups, microfinance institutions, farmers' interest groups, rural artisans' companies, and producer associations must all be credited for their contributions to the establishment of rural organizations. The research focuses on the many problems that rural marketers confront when working in remote locations. The difficulties stem mostly from the lack of a comprehensive framework for guiding decision-making in rural markets. In the present scenario, good work has been done for rural marketing, with new ideas, terminology, and technology developments combined for a better knowledge of the subject. The principles, definitions, and most recent developments and problems in the field of rural marketing are discussed in this book. This book includes chapters on developing channels and the necessity of supply chain management in gaining access to rural markets. Rural markets will benefit from new advancements in distribution management, logistics, and supply chain management. To better comprehend the retail system in rural areas, the chapter also looks at rural buying behaviour and store formats. It also familiarises the learner with many facets of the selling processin Indian rural marketplaces. Students get an awareness of rural markets with a chapter on 'Rural customers,' which covers market size, demographics, consumptionexpenditures, and the product acceptance process.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The trail of literature review can be considered as exploratory in its approach, theimportance of this review of literature can be understood in a manner that as manystudies a researcher considers take him or her more closer to the point and questionand presents a more elaborated form of research question provided that this task isdone in right direction and with a positive approach. Such a literature review may include the previous studies related to the point in question, newspaper articles, articles from magazines, research papers from the national and internal publications, government reports, reports from private research agencies. Then on the other handproper review of literature also helps in framing the objective of the study, construction of test hypothesis and taking the research question to next level.

This present study is based on online business and most part of it will be based ongrowth of online business with the help of online reviews. Here the researcher willconsider some of the popular and well known studies in relation to the topic statedabove and this will also include a chronological development of online business inthe country and even abroad.

Badugu et al (2011). In light of the problems and opportunities that rural markets present to marketers, it can be concluded that those who can grasp the dynamics ofrural markets and make full use of potential will have a bright future. To effectively impress the 230 million rural consumers dispersed over about 600,000 villages in rural India, marketers must adopt a dramatic shift in mindset toward the lively and developing rural markets. On the basis of established reports and drafts related to orthodox system of promotion i.e. advertising and direct marketing, academics and associated agencies may evaluate the best ways to communicate brand messaging. In recent years, more emphasis has been placed vies related to brand performance and interaction between internal and external brand representatives may help to maintain consumer brand connections through co-producing additional value.

Trust and an emotional tie between the brand and the customer are the foundations of such partnerships, which are enabled by brand values. The fact that the rural market accounts for over 70% of toilet-soap users and 43% of all two-wheeler purchases underscores the importance of the rural market for some FMCG and durable marketers. For TV sets, fans, pressure cookers, bicycles, washing soap, blades, tea, salt, and toothpowder, the rural sector accounts for half of the entire market. Furthermore, the rural FMCG market is increasing at a considerably quicker rate than the urban sector.

Ali et al (2012). Customers in rural areas have faith in local merchants, during the field trips, it was discovered that while retailers are aware that their consumers listen to them, they are unaware of the great concept known as the "Trust Factor." For a better result, the corporations must teach rural shopkeepers about current marketing ideas. Because price drives rural FMCG purchases, it is advised that rural marketers seek a low-cost strategy. Low pricing necessitates not just means to produce on least cost rather some cost effective promotions can solve the issue. It's also a fantastic idea to market products using a price plank. Value for money is achieved for rural clients when the purchased FMCG provides the anticipated advantages. Because the study found that rural buyers consider quality, performance, dependability, brand, and other essential criteria in addition to price, it is advised to market FMCG along rational lines rather than making low-price appeals.

Sharma, N. (2013). Product management is a middle-management role that can be used to manage a product's life cycle and allows a corporation to make all of the necessary decisions at each stage. The usage of product management by a Product Manager determines when a product is introduced and when it is removed. There are three main reasons why a Product Manager is needed. For starters, he oversees a product's income, earnings, forecasts, marketing, and development operations throughout its life cycle. Second, because winning a market involves a thorough understanding of the consumer, he finds unmet customer demands and decides on the creation of specific goods for said group of

programs. Finally, he gives instructions to the company's internal structure since he may be the product's eyes and ears throughout its life cycle. A product manager must adhere to the following three basics to increase a product's performance on the stated PLC (product Life Cycle).

Kumar, P. (2013). 161.The Indian rural market is crucial because it allows firms to expand their influence to approximately 70% of the population. Rural markets are closely related to rural economic development in terms of infrastructure, raising the level of living, and improving the quality of life of those who live in rural areas. Rural markets are preferred by most of the known and renowned companies. To access the rural market, a detailed grasp of the market and a methodical approach are required. . In order to build marketing strategy and action plans, businesses must consider the many elements those impact rural consumers' purchasing decisions. Rising buying power and shifting consumption patterns drive the development of the rural market pattern, improved infrastructure, and better availability to information and communication technologies Initiatives by the government to strengthen the rural economy. Marketers adjust their techniques in accordance with the rural environment. In the future years, consumers will be the main focus.

In our country the environment is always changing the most difficult task today is to create a scalable methodology for changing rural customers' minds over a long period of time and keeping it continuing. Traditional urban marketing methods will need to be tailored to the needs of rural markets. It has to reach out to rural customers and connect with them on a personal level in order to achieve the needed behavioural change in the future years. Despite all of the challenges inherent in ruralmarketing, India's rural scene is rapidly evolving.

Malhotra (2014) From a study perspective, the campaign's good components vastly surpassed the negative feedback. The product did risk being labelled as a fat girl's brand or a low quality cosmetics brand, but given the brainpower and money behind the campaign, as well as

Unilever's ability to meet the demands on the basis of responses from actual market. It seems that companies like Unilever can hold the market in terms of positioning and planning. To frame the market communication successfully, it employed all available communication techniques such as media, noise, marketing, and public relations. In order to track the impact of theircommunication and the image change, Dove welcomed audience input via text messages, emails, and an interactive website. It has been noticed that the internet has had a significant influence on business marketing communications initiatives. The hierarchy of effects model was used to examine how Dove uses the Internet to influence customers and to assess the campaign's appropriateness and success.

Tamrakar et al (2015). Rural India presents a fantastic potential for multinationalcorporations. When considering the difficulty and potential that rural markets present to marketers, the future appears to be bright. Customer needs, suitable distribution channels, product price, and efficient marketing techniques are all issues to consider. As a result, marketers must adjust their strategy to the dynamic and developing rural markets if they are to effectively create an impression on millions ofrural consumers in rural India.

Rehman et al (2016). Produces become commodities - items for users in the consumer-centred marketing mix method, pricing becomes the cost to client and includes energy costs and time, client location becomes the channel, and campaign becomes the communication. It may be claimed that it is only a play on words, but itgenuinely symbolises a significant shift in marketing management strategies, thinking, and values. It's not about the words, but about the best manner to presentvalue to customers. On the basis of Based on the foregoing research, debates, etc. itis easy to identify the consumer centric marketing model, also known as the 4C's model, is the most appropriate replacement for the long-standing producer centric marketing mix model, also known as the 4P's model. Furthermore, the 4C's model ismore in line with marketing philosophies and consumer behaviour psychologies in terms of its nature. Its

customer-centric approach is more in line with the current value-based marketing concept. Since marketing focuses on meeting customer happiness, the 4Cs method becomes more real.

Mohan, B. C., & Sequeira, A. H. (2016). This study reinforce the significance of brand equity research in the FMCG business by confirming the considerable effect of brandassociation and other issues like loyalty, and perceived quality on total brand equity. The brand association, brand loyalty, and perceived quality factors predicted a large amount of the variance in overall brand equity. If brand equity is to be established, itis critical for managers to measure brand association, brand loyalty, and perceived quality of FMCG brands, and to further grow them through the creation ofappropriate marketing strategies. The association between brand equity and particular non-financial performance measures (operational performance) of business was also investigated in this study. The effect of brand equity on operational success (market share) is negligible. Brands with a higher amount of brand equity had a much larger market share. The findings that the brand equity characteristics have varying effects on brand equity should help marketers better manage resources. The study's findings are useful for brand managers in justifying the resources invested on creating brand equity. The study also sheds light on whether the brand equity approach is effective for predicting future operational performance.

Varasteh et al (2019). During the recession, changes in some actions in the majority of companies are similar and can be considered general marketing and sales strategies, like "the presentation and diversification of discounts," "the distribution based on market demand," "the increase of advertising budget and promotion,"; "improvement of production technology." Some behaviours have altered in differentways in different organisations, such as "comparing product pricing to those of competitors," "inventory," "outsourcing of distribution operations," "radio and television advertising," and "providing new items connected to present products." Furthermore, during a recession, individuals will be unable to purchase, manipulate order size, packing in volumes to lower

product pricing. In order to remain in the market, corporations will also postpone the introduction of new items during a recession. During the economic slowdown some changes are required to be made in the majority of companies are similar and can be considered general marketing and sales strategies, such as "the presentation and diversification of discounts," "the distribution based on market demand," "the increase of advertising budget and promotion," and "improvement of production technology." Some behaviour have altered in different ways in different organisations, such as "comparing product pricing to those of competitors," "inventory," "outsourcing of distribution operations," "radio and television advertising," and "providing new items connected to presentproducts."

Khalil (2021). The major findings of this study reveal that while product does not have an interface with quality perception in FMCG customers, pricing does have an interaction with quality perception in customers. Similarly, the location of FMCG hasan impact on quality perception, and promotional activities have a direct impact onperceived FMCG quality. Furthermore, buyers' perceptions of quality of FMCG products are influenced by word of mouth. Furthermore, WOM does not have a rolein the interaction between product and quality perception. The link between price andquality perception, A scale was established for examining all of the aforementioned associations, and a model was also verified in the current study. FMCG customers' location and perceived quality Furthermore, there is a promotion connection.

2.1. Significance of Study

Indian rural sector holds around 70 per cent of the country's population and this huge population can cater any number of FMCG based companies in terms of actual sales and volumes required. It will be right to state that the urban market is somewhat saturate and companies are looking forward to new avenues; legitimate answer is rural India. Not only is the rural population large it is growing richer by day.Research will lead to the understanding of impact of rural marketing (with special

reference to FMCG products marketed by multinational companies). Need ofresearch here is to find out how a multinational aims at scale of economics and mass market with huge volume and heavy investment in marketing. An attempt is made by the researcher to an examination of characteristic and size of rural market, challenges confronting the expanding rural marketing and strategies for effective marketing to tap the untapped market.

2.2. Scope of the Study

This present study is focused on the related surveys conducted in the selected districts nearby Himachal Pradesh. The results of the study will present a number of findings and suggestions that can help in establishment of business in rural parts ofHimachal Pradesh and even rest of the country. As the focus of the study is on FMCG products the outputs will be based on the same. Then on the other hand this present study is going to present he basic needs and demands of the rural people (as customers) and help the said FMCG companies to design and cater the same accordingly. The study is also highlighted the huge potential of rural market in India.This study is conducted on the FMGC products consumed by rural people of thecountry.

2.3. Statement of the problem

As the title of the study states "A study of rural marketing in Himachal Pradesh with special reference to FMCG Marketed by multinational companies" this present studywill evaluate the system followed by above stated FMCG to tap the vast Indian ruralmarket.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. More emphasis is given to understand changing pattern in the rural market, and highlight the opportunities in the rural market for FMCG products

2. To study the behaviour of rural markets and its co-relation with aggressiveMarketing strategies

3. To understand the distribution network adopted by the Jmultinationalcompanies in rural market

4. To understand and study how the multinational companies are offering theirproduct to the rural customer.

4. HYPOTHESIS OF THE RESEARCH

Hypothesis 1

H0: The penetrative strategies adopted by MNCs in the rural markets of HimachalPradesh have an aggressive aspect.

H1: The penetrative strategies adopted by MNCs in the rural markets of HimachalPradesh do not have an aggressive aspect.

Hypothesis 2

H0: Efficient distribution system strategy of MNCs brings success to them whileMarketing FMCG in the rural markets of Himachal Pradesh.

H1: Efficient distribution system strategy of MNCs may not brings success to themwhile Marketing FMCG in the rural markets of Himachal Pradesh.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design:

This present study is based on primary data and will make the use of both the primary and secondary sources of the same. The primary data will support the process of descriptive research, which is used to get a broad picture of the topic under study. It entails observing the research subject in his or her natural environment, free of any influence or control.

Data Collection

Both primary and secondary data from relevant sources will be acquired to get in- depth understanding about Online Product Reviews on Consumer Behaviour with special references to Himachal Pradesh, India.

Sources of secondary data are as follows:

- Books
- Articles in newspapers
- **J**ournals

The articles of business magazines as well as on the web and internet support havealso been considered for the purpose of secondary data collection.

Sources of Primary data:

The primary data was collected by the extensive use of the following data gatheringtechniques and tools:-

- Questionnaire
- Personal Interview
- Observation through personal visits.

Pilot Survey

A pilot study is proposed to be conducted with the questionnaire to a

sample size of 50 respondents i.e. 10% of the total sample of 500 respondents. On the basis of this pilot survey some of the required corrections will be made in the questionnaire and survey approach.

Study Population

The research will include rural people of adult age, certain education status and framed occupation. Theses respondents will be from 6 districts namely, Mandi, Kangra, Kullu, Bilaspur, Hamirpur and Una.

Sample Techniques and Sample Size

Respondents will be drawn from different local households of the selected area of interest or the above stated districts. These districts were chosen because they contain the highest number of rural areas and maximum people engaged in agricultural activities. To ensure a more accurate representation, the sample will be drawn using the quota sampling approach. The total sample size of the study will be 500 respondents and this will be finalized on the basis of results gained from pilot survey.

The Research Instrument

Data will be collected utilizing a structured questionnaire comprising statements relating to the studies goals and will include questions of the following type:

- 5 point scale
- Yes/No
- MCQ
- Open ended, etc.

Statistical Analysis

The collected data has been edited to avoid unwanted information and has been arranged in proper sequence. The edited data was coded and classified for suitable tabulation graphs, charts, diagrams etc. wherever

necessary. A suitable statistical technique has been used for analyzing data such as ChiSquare test that had helped in drawing meaningful conclusions for marketing strategies adopted by MNCs in respect of FMCG products.

Cronbach's alpha will be used for reliability measurement. Various tools such as;

- Average
- Percentage
- Standard Deviation,
- T-Test,
- Correlation/Regression will be used to derive the required conclusions.

MS Excel and SPSS Ver. 22.0 will be used as a data analysis platform.

Sample format of Data Collection

S.No	Sample Districts	Customer No.	Retailer No.
1.	Mandi		
2.	Kangra		
3.	Kullu		
4.	Bilaspur		
5.	Hamirpur		
6.	Una		

Table shows the sample size in the respective 6 districts under study i.e. Mandi,Kullu, Kangra, Hamirpur, Bilaspur and Una for the study.

The following table is presented to understand the research work carried out in therespective villages of the districts under study.

Sample format for Village Visits

S.No	Name of District	Name of Village
1.	Mandi	
2.	Kangra	
3.	Kullu	
4.	Bilaspur	
5.	Hamirpur	
6.	Una	

6. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The present study suffers from the following limitations:

1. The study results are applicable to the study period only.
2. The study results are applicable to Himachal Pradesh state only.
3. The study is conducted in the selected districts of Himachal Pradesh and theresult may vary in other part of the country.
4. Then because of cultural differences in consumer behaviour, generalization to other nations may be restricted because the sample was obtained in India.

7. PROPOSED CHAPTER SCHEME

The study has been chapterised into five chapters:

First Chapter

This chapter deals with the introduction and design of the study which includes introduction, meaning and definition of rural marketing, significance of the study, objectives of the study, hypotheses of the study, research methodology, limitations of the study and the chapter frame.

Second Chapter

Presents the conceptual review relevant to the research

Third chapter

Portrays the chronological literature reviews on women investors.

Fourth chapter

This chapter presents the analysis and Interpretations.

Fifth chapter

Recapitulates the key findings future research directions and conclusion

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